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THE GARDEN CALENDAR

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★ MAY 14 1934 ★  
U. S. Department of Agriculture

A radio discussion by W. R. Beattie, Bureau of Plant Industry, delivered in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, broadcast by a network of 48 associate NBC radio stations, Thursday, May 3, 1934.

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Hello Farm and Home Family: Things are happening thick and fast in our gardens and orchards these days, and it is often a problem to know what to do and what not to do. At least, in my own case with very little time for my own garden, it is largely a matter of doing the most essential things, and letting some of the other things go undone. Just now many of you - like myself - are most interested in getting your planting done, and your gardens started. This is especially true of you folks who live in the northeastern section of the country where the season is rather backward.

Recently, I've received numerous letters asking for further information regarding the new strawberries that I have mentioned in my Garden Calendar talks. I notice that in a number of cases you folks have not gotten names and the spelling correct. I am responsible for this, as I should have spelled the names so that you could have caught them. The new variety recommended for a market and preserving strawberry in the South is the Blakemore - B L A K E M O R E. The new strawberry for southern home gardens is the Southland, that's easy I am sure - S O U T H L A N D. The strawberry varieties that I mentioned for the northeastern sections are the Dorsett - D O R S E T T, and the Fairfax - F A I R F A X, the same as Lord Fairfax who figured so prominently in the early history of Maryland. I have received several inquiries as to where the plants of these new varieties may be secured, and if you want this information just drop me a postcard.

The new varieties of tomatoes that I mentioned are the Pritchard, P R I T C H A R D, named after the late Frederick Pritchard who for years was connected with the plant-improvement work of the Department, and who undoubtedly contributed more to the improvement of tomato varieties than any other one man during recent years. The Pritchard is also known as "Scarlet Topper" in some localities. Another new early tomato is the Break O'Day, spelled Break capital O, an apostrophe, capital Day - Break O'Day. The third, and most important of the new tomato varieties, is the Marglobe spelled M a r g l o b e. The Marglobe is perhaps the best canning tomato ever produced. It is a second early variety and the seed of Marglobe can not be secured from practically every seedsman in the country. The Break O'Day has lighter foliage than the Marglobe, and for that reason is probably a better variety to plant in the New England States, and sections where the ripening season for tomatoes is a little short. Here around Washington where we have lots of sunshine in midsummer, I find that the fruits of the Break O'Day sometimes sunscald due to its having so little foliage. I would recommend this variety for the consideration of the lazy gardener who lets the weeds grow in his garden because a few weeks will shade the tomatoes from the sun. Now please don't quote me as advocating weedy gardens, but I'm just suggesting this method for the consideration of the gardener who does not keep the weeds out of his tomatoes.

(over)





At present, I have about 30 plants of the "Pritchard" tomato growing in 6-inch flowerpots in my coldframe. They are about 6 or 8 inches high and fine sturdy plants all ready to go out into the garden. I am afraid to put them out yet because we sometimes have frosts here around Washington as late as May 10 or 12. When I was over in New Jersey last Monday, I noticed some of the tomato growers around Swedesboro were setting their early tomato plants in the field. Of course, it will be at least 2 or 2 weeks before some of you folks will feel safe in planting out your early tomatoes. I want to make this suggestion, if you will add plenty of water around the roots of your tomato plants as you set them in the garden, then drive a wooden shingle or a piece of thin board on the windy side of each plant to protect it, your plants will stand up much better than if they are set without water and left exposed to the wind.

I follow the practice of pruning my early tomatoes to a single stem and tying them to stakes about 4 feet in height. In that way the early tomatoes are kept off the ground, and I have a notion that they ripen just a little earlier than where the plants are allowed to grow naturally on the ground.

Another suggestion, don't be in too big a hurry planting your Lima beans, at least wait until the ground is fairly warm. Last season, I think I planted the large Lima beans at least three times, and still did not get a stand. It seemed that every time I made a planting there came a cold rain, and the seeds rotted in the ground. I had the soil in perfect condition, and the hills were made up 2 or 3 weeks in advance of planting, but I simply couldn't get a stand of Lima beans. I blamed the weather, but that didn't give us a crop of Lima beans.

In case the rainfall is short in your locality and your garden soil is rather dry, I would suggest that you firm the soil pretty thoroughly over the seeds of various kinds as you plant them. Where the soil is dry and loose garden seeds, especially those of beets, carrots, salsify and parsnips fail to get enough moisture to sprout them and as a result you get a poor stand. When I scatter the seeds in a drill or furrow, if the ground is very dry, I often take a sprinkling can and wet the bottom of the furrow thoroughly before I cover the seeds then by firming the soil over the seeds with the back of the hoe, I usually get a pretty good stand.

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